

Amendments to the Claims:

1 - 20. (canceled)

21. (new) A winch assembly comprising:

a winch spool,

an hydraulic drive motor,

means for coupling said drive motor to said winch spool whereby said winch spool may be rotatably driven by said drive motor,

hydraulic supply means for supplying hydraulic fluid to said hydraulic drive motor, and

control means for controlling the supply of hydraulic fluid from said hydraulic pump to said hydraulic motor.

22. (new) A winch assembly comprising:

a winch spool,

an hydraulic drive motor,

coupling means for coupling said drive motor to said winch spool whereby to effect rotation of said winch spool by said drive motor,

hydraulic supply means for supplying hydraulic fluid to said hydraulic drive motor, said hydraulic supply means comprising an hydraulic pump, and an electric motor for driving said hydraulic pump, and

control means for controlling the operation of said electric motor and thus said hydraulic pump, the supply of hydraulic fluid from said hydraulic pump to said hydraulic motor, and said coupling means to control the coupling of said drive motor to said winch spool.

23. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 22 wherein said control means includes control valve means connected between said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor.

24. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 22 wherein said control valve means comprises a solenoid operated valve and wherein said control means includes a switch or switches selectively actuatable to connect said electric motor and said solenoid valve to a power supply.

25. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 24 wherein said control means include means for delaying the supply of current from said power supply to said electric motor upon actuation of said switch or switches whereby said electric motor commences operation after operation of said solenoid valve.

26. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 24 wherein said control means includes a remote control unit for remotely controlling operation of said switch or switches.

27. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 23 wherein said control means is adapted to cause operation of said hydraulic pump after operation of said control valve means.

28. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 22 wherein said coupling means between said hydraulic drive motor and winch spool prevents disengagement of said hydraulic drive motor from said winch spool when said winch spool is subject to a load.

29. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 28 wherein said coupling means comprises a clutch which when actuated directly couples said hydraulic drive motor to said spool and actuating means for actuating said clutch.

30. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 29 wherein said clutch comprises a dog clutch having complementary clutch members connected to said drive motor and

spool respectively.

31. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 30 wherein said complementary clutch members comprise at least one pin or dog provided on a drive plate coupled to said hydraulic motor and at least one complementary aperture provided in a drivable plate connected to or forming part of said spool.

32. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 30 wherein said spool is mounted for movement axially to effect engagement of said clutch members or disengagement of said clutch members.

33. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 32 wherein said clutch-actuating means is operative to move said spool axially to effect engagement of the clutch members.

34. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 33 and including means for causing operation of said clutch actuating means when fluid is supplied from said pump to said hydraulic drive motor whereby to cause coupling of said hydraulic drive motor to said spool through said clutch.

35. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 34 and including one or more hydraulic supply lines between said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic drive motor and wherein said clutch actuating means comprises an hydraulic actuator connected to said one or more hydraulic supply lines whereby fluid is supplied to said hydraulic actuator to cause and maintain coupling between said drive motor and said spool when fluid is supplied to said hydraulic drive motor.

36. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 35 and including further valve means between said control valve means and said drive motor, said further valve

means controlling the supply of fluid from said control valve means to said drive motor and exhaustion of fluid from said drive motor to delay operation of said drive motor.

37. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 22 and including braking means associated with said hydraulic motor and operable to brake said hydraulic motor when hydraulic drive motor is not supplied with fluid.

38. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 22 wherein said control means includes control valve means connected between said pump and said drive motor and wherein said control means includes means for delaying operation of said pump and/or supply of fluid to said drive motor until after the operation of said control valve means.

39. (new) A winch assembly comprising:

- a support frame,
- a winch spool mounted for rotation on said support frame,
- an hydraulic motor mounted to said support frame and aligned axially with said winch spool,
- hydraulically actuatable coupling means for coupling said drive motor to said winch spool whereby said hydraulic motor can rotatably drive said winch spool,
- an hydraulic pump remote from said hydraulic motor for supplying hydraulic fluid to said hydraulic motor and said coupling means,
- an electric drive motor coupled to said hydraulic pump;
- control means for controlling operation of said electric drive motor and thereby operation of said hydraulic pump to control the supply of hydraulic fluid to said coupling means and thereby the coupling of said drive motor to said winch spool and the supply of hydraulic fluid to said hydraulic drive motor for controlling operation of said drive motor and thus the rotation of said winch spool.

40. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 39 wherein said winch spool is mounted for axial movement towards and away from said hydraulic motor and wherein said coupling means is operable to move said spool axially towards said hydraulic motor to effect coupling between said hydraulic motor and said winch spool.

41. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 40 wherein said coupling means includes an hydraulic actuator, a pivotally mounted arm connected to said actuator, said arm having a portion cooperable with said spool whereby actuation of said actuator causes pivotal movement of said arm and said axial movement of said spool.

42. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 39 and including at least one fluid supply line connecting said hydraulic motor to said hydraulic pump and wherein said control means includes a first valve for connecting said fluid supply line to said hydraulic pump and a second valve for connecting said fluid supply line to said hydraulic motor, said second valve delaying the supply of fluid to said hydraulic motor.

43. (new) A winch assembly as claimed in claim 42 wherein said second valve comprises a fluid actuated valve, said valve being actuated when fluid is supplied to said at least one fluid supply line by said first valve.